

Long Bets

Here are some of the predictions from the Long Bets website: <http://longbets.org>. In order to make a long bet on the website, a person must predict something at least two years away, and argue for their prediction based on a theory of how the world will proceed. If you are curious, you can see the full rules here: <http://longbets.org/rules/>.

“Apple will release an electric car within the next decade.”

With the Apple Watch, we're witnessing Apple shift away from being a tech brand to being a tech-powered Luxury brand. Apple's expertise in creating amazing software-based UX puts them way ahead of every luxury brand as soon as software is involved in the product. With software eating the World, Apple's UX expertise will become a distinctive advantage in an increasingly large number of verticals.

-Toby Langel

(see the full argument at <http://longbets.org/678/>)

“By September 27th 2071 long extinct trilobites (or direct descendents of) will be found in the deep waters of the seas possibly, but not exclusively, around underwater hydrothermal vents.”

My bet is that with the demand for new sources of fossil fuels and other mineral wealth, deep sea drilling will reveal that this creature beat extinction or has a direct descendent living in the oceans of the world today.

-Vincent T Ciaramella

(see the full argument at <http://longbets.org/675/>)

“By 2100, a small self-sustainable population will be living off this planet.”

Overcrowding, persecution/totalitarianism, and the classic search for new opportunities and new horizons will produce the people and the motives for such expansion. The end result will be a Cosmic Diaspora over the next 1,000 years, with a humanised Galaxy by 1,000,000 AD. The alternative is extinction.

-Michael H Martin-Smith

(see the full argument at <http://longbets.org/448/>)

In order for a prediction to become a bet, someone else must challenge the prediction and offer a counter-argument. Here are some of the bets from the Long Bets website:

“By the end of the year 2020, a professional sports team that is part of either the National Football League, the National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, the National Hockey League, or Major League Soccer will integrate and have a woman as a team member/player.”



Thomas R. Leavens argues in favor of his prediction:

My prediction is based on the belief that by 2020, a woman athlete will emerge as a member of such a team, based not only on her skill but also on the greater available pool of women playing such sports, the incentive of the greater talent compensation available to players on the major sports teams (as opposed to the compensation paid to current women-only sports teams), and the changing overall societal view of the role of gender that will make a team's decision to add a woman player to a previously all-male team more compelling.

His challenger, Nils Gilman, argues as follows:

At the elite, professional level, male athletes in these sports exceed the conceivable strength of all females. This applies to football, soccer, hockey, basketball and baseball. Genetic or chemical modification could conceivably change this, and if such technologies were to become available, they would presumably also be used by male athletes, thus leveling the playing field.

“At least one human alive in the year 2000 will still be alive in 2150.”

Peter Schwartz provides background for his prediction:

The Hayflick limit is the limit of the maximum number of cell replications that a human being (or any species) can engage in. So, how many times do our cells replace themselves? That's the limit of human lifespan. When you can't replace your cells anymore, you die. And Leonard Hayflick calculated that number for a variety of species, and for human beings it was 120. So we have almost no documented instances of people living more than one hundred and twenty years.

Science and medicine will not only be essentially extending people to their normal full life span (i.e. 120), but will extend the human natural life span to beyond that, and a reasonable guess as to how much will be gained over the next century or so is at least 25 or 30 years.

His challenger, Melody K. Haller, responds:

Peter's bet blithely refers to overcoming the Hayflick Limit without even considering the bioethical or social implications of doing so. I suspect that it will be broken, like the atom. But this is one of the fundamental building blocks of evolution--what arrogance and self-importance to think that our existence is so important and valuable that we have the right to mess with evolution, or that we have any clue whatsoever as to the implications of doing so. There's a tremendous outcry about cloning, bypassing sexual reproduction, but no one seems to think there's a problem with cracking the code to immortality.

